

**For Immediate Release:**

August 27, 2008

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### **Partnerships help San José's largest events go "zero waste"**

Just over a year ago, recycling was almost unheard of at community events. This year a concerted effort to clean up San José's five largest community events brings together the City's Department of Environmental Services, event promoters, recycling haulers, and youth workers from the San José Conservation Corps.

In 2007, San José's five largest community events produced about 100 tons of waste -- enough to fill 10 residential garbage trucks. Now event organizers are composting or recycling almost everything, greening their operations and keeping waste out of local landfills.

The upcoming Tapestry Arts Festival, slated for Aug. 31-Sept. 1 in Downtown San José, will be the fourth of five large public events to model "zero waste" practices this year. Food vendors will use compostable plates, cups and utensils. Food waste and charcoal will be composted, and all cardboard, bottles, cans, glass and cooking oils will be recycled.

"San José wants to be a Zero Waste city -- and that goal requires participation from everyone in our community, including event organizers, businesses, residents, and schools," said John Stuffelbean, director of San Jose's Environmental Services Department. "It's exciting to see others take the idea of 'going green' and bring it to a whole new level, because they're doing more than the City could do alone."

Some event promoters -- like San Jose Jazz -- are going above and beyond. More than 100,000 people attended the three-day Jazz Festival Aug. 8-10, and yet a phenomenal 93% of waste from the event was recycled or composted—a record achievement for a large public event in San José. San Jose Jazz was the first to pilot zero waste efforts last year, when the festival reduced waste going to the landfill by 60%.

“I like to say that everyone stepped up to the ‘compostable plate’ this year to achieve this record diversion rate. It was truly a cooperative effort,” said Geoff Roach CEO of San Jose Jazz. “Besides the obvious benefits of reducing the environmental impact of the festival, the event represents an incredible opportunity to show 100,000 people that they can continue to reduce their own impact when they return home and long after the festival is over.”

The City works with San José-based GreenWaste Recovery to provide transportation and processing of compostable materials, and secondary sorting of trash to ensure everything that can be recycled or composted is. Materials collected from the Comcast San Jose Jazz Festival were transported to the GreenWaste Recovery processing facility, where recyclable material was sorted and separated, with the remaining organic waste sent to the Z-Best Composting Facility located in Gilroy.

“The organic materials make perfect compost feedstock for our operations,” said Michael Gross, Marketing Manager of Z-Best. “Composting these materials instead of burying them in landfills helps reduce our carbon footprint and will provide a marketable product for our customers in the Bay Area.”

San Jose Jazz did more than top-notch recycling. The event also featured a solar-powered stage and solar generators that continued the theme of reducing the environmental footprint. Besides generating electricity from solar power, the stage was especially constructed

to use high-efficiency lights and sound systems that reduce energy needs by 80%. Most outdoor festivals are powered by portable diesel generators. The solar stage helped reduce Co2 emissions by over 6000 pounds, the equivalent of not driving a car 7,800 miles.

In May, San José's Cinco de Mayo celebration achieved a 44% recycling rate, and the American Independence Festival in July diverted 70% of its waste from landfills by recycling and composting.

The San José Conservation Corps provides more than 150 Corps members and staff to assist the City with recycling at all of these events. Corps members help by collecting materials from eco-stations, where clearly marked containers are used to sort items for composting, recycling and waste.

"The Conservation Corps is committed to making all of the City's green initiatives a success," said Bob Henessy, Executive Director and Founder of the Conservation Corps. "But the great part about this program is that we're growing a whole cadre of environmental ambassadors in the process. Our youth workers are interested in the environment – and they will be our stewards in the future."

### **About City of San José**

San José has long been a national leader in recycling, launching one of the nation's first curbside recycling programs in 1992. For more than a decade, the City has maintained one of the best recycling rates in the nation, with an overall landfill diversion rate of 62%.

### **About San Jose Jazz**

San Jose Jazz, producer of the annual Comcast San Jose Jazz Festival, is a public benefit corporation dedicated to promoting jazz through performance and education to enrich the lives of people in our community. Proceeds from the performances help to support San Jose Jazz's education and outreach programs, including an in-school program that reaches 4,000 school-aged children a year about jazz and innovation while also delivering an anti-tobacco message. For more on the 19th Annual Comcast San Jose Jazz Festival presented by Southwest Airlines, please visit [www.sanjosejazz.org](http://www.sanjosejazz.org).

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